

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### Listing of Claims:

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- 1           1. (Currently amended) A method for facilitating use of a collation  
2 element that supports a large number of characters, comprising:  
3           receiving the collation element;  
4           reading a primary weight value from a primary weight field within the  
5 collation element;  
6           if the primary weight value falls within a reserved set of values, reading an  
7 additional portion of the primary weight value from a secondary weight field and a  
8 tertiary weight field within the collation element; and  
9           if the primary weight value is not within the reserved set of values,  
10           reading a secondary weight value from the secondary  
11 weight field within the collation element, and  
12           reading a tertiary weight value from the tertiary weight field  
13 within the collation element,  
14           wherein the primary weight value identifies a character;  
15           wherein the secondary weight value can specify an accent  
16           on the character; and  
17           wherein the tertiary weight value can specify case  
18           information for the character.

- 1           2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein if the primary weight value  
2 falls within a reserved set of values, the method additionally comprises:

3 setting the secondary weight value to a secondary default value; and  
4 setting the tertiary weight value to a tertiary default value.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collation element adheres  
2 to a structure specified in Unicode Technical Report No. 10.

1 4. (Canceled).

1 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collation element is four  
2 bytes in size, of which the primary weight field is two bytes, the secondary weight  
3 field is one byte and the tertiary weight field is one byte, unless a value in the  
4 primary weight field belongs to the reserved set of values, in which case the  
5 primary weight field takes up all four bytes of the collation element.

1 6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the reserved set of  
2 values for the primary weight value includes hexadecimal values 0xFFFF0-0xFFFF.

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1 7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collation element is taken  
2 from a collation weight table that is used to map characters to collation weights in  
3 order to establish an ordering between strings of characters.

1 8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising constructing a  
2 sorting key for a string by:  
3 reading each character in the string;  
4 looking up a corresponding collation element for each character from the  
5 collation weight table; and  
6 adding the corresponding collation element for each character to the  
7 sorting key.

1           9. (Original) The method of claim 8,  
2           wherein the sorting key is associated with a record within a database; and  
3           wherein the sorting key is used to construct a linguistic index for the  
4           database.

1           10. (Currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing  
2           instructions that when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a  
3           method for facilitating use of a collation element that supports a large number of  
4           characters, the method comprising:  
5                 receiving the collation element;  
6                 reading a primary weight value from a primary weight field within the  
7           collation element;  
8                 if the primary weight value falls within a reserved set of values, reading an  
9           additional portion of the primary weight value from a secondary weight field and a  
10          tertiary weight field within the collation element; and  
11          if the primary weight value is not within the reserved set of values,  
12                 reading a secondary weight value from the secondary  
13          weight field within the collation element, and  
14                 reading a tertiary weight value from the tertiary weight field  
15          within the collation element,  
16                 wherein the primary weight value identifies a character;  
17                 wherein the secondary weight value can specify an accent  
18                 on the character; and  
19                 wherein the tertiary weight value can specify case  
20                 information for the character.

1 11. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 10,  
2 wherein if the primary weight value falls within a reserved set of values, the  
3 method additionally comprises:

4 setting the secondary weight value to a secondary default value; and  
5 setting the tertiary weight value to a tertiary default value.

1 12. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 10,  
2 wherein the collation element adheres to a structure specified in Unicode  
3 Technical Report No. 10.

1 13. (Canceled).

1 14. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 10,  
2 wherein the collation element is four bytes in size, of which the primary weight  
3 field is two bytes, the secondary weight field is one byte and the tertiary weight  
4 field is one byte, unless a value in the primary weight field belongs to the reserved  
5 set of values, in which case the primary weight field takes up all four bytes of the  
6 collation element.

1 15. (Currently amended) The computer-readable storage medium of claim  
2 14, wherein the reserved set of values for the primary weight value includes  
3 hexadecimal values 0xFFFF0-0xFFFF.

1 16. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 10,  
2 wherein the collation element is taken from a collation weight table that is used to  
3 map characters to collation weights in order to establish an ordering between  
4 strings of characters.

1           17. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 16,  
2 wherein the method further comprises constructing a sorting key for a string by:  
3           reading each character in the string;  
4           looking up a corresponding collation element for each character from the  
5 collation weight table; and  
6           adding the corresponding collation element for each character to the  
7 sorting key.

1           18. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 17,  
2 wherein the sorting key is associated with a record within a database; and  
3 wherein the sorting key is used to construct a linguistic index for the  
4 database.

1           19. (Currently amended) An apparatus that facilitates use of a collation  
2 element that supports a large number of characters, comprising:  
3           an assignment mechanism that is configured to read a primary weight  
4 value from a primary weight field within the collation element;  
5           wherein if the primary weight value falls within a reserved set of values,  
6 the assignment mechanism is configured to read an additional portion of the  
7 primary weight value from a secondary weight field and a tertiary weight field  
8 within the collation element; and  
9           wherein if the primary weight value is not within the reserved set of  
10 values, the assignment mechanism is configured to,  
11                       read a secondary weight value from the secondary weight  
12                       field within the collation element, and to  
13                       read a tertiary weight value from the tertiary weight field  
14                       within the collation element,  
15                       wherein the primary weight value identifies a character;

16                               wherein the secondary weight value can specify an accent  
17                               on the character; and  
18                               wherein the tertiary weight value can specify case  
19                               information for the character.

1               20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein if the primary weight  
2 value falls within the reserved set of values, the assignment mechanism is  
3 configured to:  
4               set the secondary weight value to a secondary default value; and to  
5               set the tertiary weight value to a tertiary default value.

1               21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the collation element  
2 adheres to a structure specified in Unicode Technical Report No. 10.

1               22. (Canceled).

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1               23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the collation element is  
2 four bytes in size, of which the primary weight field is two bytes, the secondary  
3 weight field is one byte and the tertiary weight field is one byte, unless a value in  
4 the primary weight field belongs to the reserved set of values, in which case the  
5 primary weight field takes up all four bytes of the collation element.

1               24. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the reserved  
2 set of values for the primary weight value includes hexadecimal values 0xFFFF0-  
3 0xFFFF.

1           25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the collation element is  
2 taken from a collation weight table that is used to map characters to collation  
3 weights in order to establish an ordering between strings of characters.

1           26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25, further comprising a key  
2 construction mechanism for constructing a sorting key for a string, wherein the  
3 key construction mechanism is configured to:

4           read each character in the string;

5           lookup a corresponding collation element for each character from the  
6 collation weight table; and to

7           add the corresponding collation element for each character to the sorting  
8 key.

1           27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 26,  
2 wherein the sorting key is associated with a record within a database; and  
3 wherein the sorting key is used to construct a linguistic index for the  
4 database.